

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A ground rod cap, comprising:

a crown portion configured with a cylindrical cavity to receive a ground rod which ~~can be used to establish a reference voltage~~, and to deflect a falling object away from the ground rod, an inner surface of the crown portion defining a void that encircles a portion of the cylindrical cavity; and

a support portion connected to the crown portion, the support portion configured to cover a ground rod clamp which ~~can be attached~~ connecting a ground wire to the ground rod, and including a curved wall having an inner surface and an outer surface, wherein the inner surface defines a hollow cylinder that surrounds the ground rod clamp attaching the ground wire to the ground rod, such that the location of the ground rod, ground rod clamp, and ground wire attachment is surrounded by a cylindrical void.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 21, wherein ~~the~~ an outer surface of the crown portion is curved.

4. (Original) The cap of claim 3, wherein the outer surface of the crown portion defines a dome.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 2 1, wherein:
the ground rod cap defines a first axis; and
the cylindrical cavity defines a second axis, wherein the second axis is
coincident with the first axis.

7. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 2 1, wherein the cylindrical cavity has a first end proximate the bottom surface of the crown portion and a second end opposite the first end, and wherein the second end of the cavity is positioned away from the outer surface of the crown portion by a distance greater than or equal to a diameter associated with the cylindrical cavity.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 8 1, wherein the void is bounded by a curved surface.

10. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 8 1, wherein:
the cap has a first maximum depth associated therewith; and
the void has a second maximum depth associated therewith, wherein the first maximum depth is greater than the second maximum depth.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 11, wherein the curved wall is a continuously curving wall.

13. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 11, wherein the curved wall has a uniform thickness.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) The cap of claim 1, wherein the crown portion and the support portion are fabricated from a rubber-like material.

17. (Currently Amended) The cap of claim 4, 16, wherein the rubber-like material is PVC plastic.

18. (Original) The cap of claim 1, wherein the crown portion and the support portion are integral.

19. (Previously Presented) A ground rod cap, comprising:
a closed end;
an open end opposite the closed end,
an outer surface;
an inner surface; and

a ground rod receptacle within the ground rod cap which protrudes towards the open end of the ground rod cap and is defined by the inner surface of the ground rod cap, the ground rod receptacle defining a central cavity within the ground rod receptacle to receive a ground rod, the ground rod receptacle further defining curved side surfaces which are surrounded by a cylindrical void within the ground rod cap.

20. (Previously Presented) A ground rod cap, comprising:

a crown portion including:

an outer surface which is curved to define a dome having a closed

first end and an open second end;

an inner surface;

a ground rod receptacle which protrudes towards the open second end of the crown portion and is defined by the inner surface of the crown portion, the ground rod receptacle defining a central cavity within the ground rod receptacle to receive a ground rod, the ground rod receptacle further defining curved side surfaces which are surrounded by a cylindrical void within the crown portion, wherein the cylindrical void facilitates deformation of the dome when an object strikes the ground rod cap to deflect the object away from the ground rod; and

a support portion including a cylindrical wall connected to and extending from the open second end of the crown portion to define a hollow cylindrical opening configured to cover a ground rod clamp for attaching a ground wire to the ground rod.